

Welcome!



Netscape F

# CNN.com / WORLD

 

[MAIN PAGE](#)  
[WORLD](#)  
[U.S.](#)  
[WEATHER](#)  
[BUSINESS](#)  
[SPORTS](#)  
[POLITICS](#)  
[LAW](#)  
[SCI-TECH](#)  
[SPACE](#)  
[HEALTH](#)  
[ENTERTAINMENT](#)  
[TRAVEL](#)  
[EDUCATION](#)  
[IN-DEPTH](#)

[QUICK NEWS](#)  
[LOCAL](#)  
[COMMUNITY](#)  
[MULTIMEDIA](#)  
[E-MAIL SERVICES](#)  
[CNNtoGO](#)  
[ABOUT US](#)

[CNN TV](#)  
[what's on](#)  
[show transcripts](#)  
[CNN Headline News](#)  
[CNN International](#)  
[askCNN](#)

[EDITIONS](#)  
[CNN.com Asia](#)  
[CNN.com Europe](#)  
[set your edition](#)

[Languages](#)  
[Time, Inc.](#)

## U.S. envoy: Racism talks hijacked

September 3, 2001 Posted: 7:40 PM EDT (2340 GMT)

[SAVE THIS](#) [EMAIL THIS](#)  
[PRINT THIS](#) [MOST POPULAR](#)

**DURBAN, South Africa (CNN) -- A member of the U.S. delegation, Congressman Tom Lantos, said the U.N. Conference Against Racism had been "hijacked" by those hostile to Israel.**

"We came here with the best of intentions and have been rebuffed every step of the way," he told CNN, saying the walkout was "the principled thing to do" after the U.S. came up against an "iron wall."

"The United States is utterly innocent in watching the conference collapse. It is collapsing because some people were hell bent on torpedoing it, and succeeded.

"(U.S. Secretary of State) Colin Powell desperately wanted this conference to succeed. We have been working for eight months to clean up the language.

"We came up against a desire to turn a conference against discrimination into a conference against Israel."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said his country regretted very much withdrawing from the conference which he called "very bizarre."

"The show in Durban was supposed to defend human rights but became a show of hatred," he said.

"I feel peace was defeated," he said.

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat called the pullout by the U.S. and Israel "very unfortunate."

"The U.S. should concentrate on stopping Israeli practices against the Palestinians and its occupation, not concentrate on the language that describes those practices.

### VIDEO

CNN's Tumi Makgabo talks to U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos about the U.S. withdrawal (September 3)



[Play video](#)

(QuickTime, Real or Windows Media)

CNN's Jerrold Kessel explains why Israel is shocked by negative sentiment on the streets of Durban and within the Racism conference (September 3)



[Play video](#)

(QuickTime, Real or Windows Media)

CNN's Margaret Lowrie reports on the British position regarding slavery (September 3)



[Play video](#)

(QuickTime, Real or Windows Media)

### EXTRA INFORMATION



In depth, racism

"We have to bear in mind that Israel is the last country on earth that still holds the title of occupying power."

around the world [Facing hate](#)

In Durban, Palestinian Ambassador Salman el Herfi said the Arab delegations had been very reasonable, but the U.S. delegation had refused to compromise.

"It's sad," he told the Associated Press. "It's sad they didn't leave room for dialogue, they didn't leave room for flexibility."

Herfi accused the U.S. of pulling out because of its own refusal to face up to responsibility for slavery and the injustices done to Native Americans.

"Their withdrawal will not affect the success of conference. The conference will succeed," he said. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, attending the conference as a member of the Black Leadership Forum, said he was disappointed that U.S. President George W. Bush allowed the debate over Israel to decide U.S. participation.

"In many ways, the American delegation never walked in," Jackson told the Associated Press.

Human rights organisations at the conference condemned the U.S. withdrawal.

"This is going to be a big disappointment for victims of racism everywhere in the world," said Reed Brody, leader of the conference delegation for Human Rights Watch told the Associated Press.

"The United States is using a political smoke screen to avoid dealing with the many very real issues at this conference."

## ➔ RESOURCES

Message Board: [UN conference against racism](#)

## ➔ MORE STORIES

[U.S. and Israel leave racism talks](#)

[Africa calls for slavery apology](#)

## ➔ QUICKVOTE

Are the United States and Israel right to pull out of the U.N. racism conference?

Yes ☐

No ☐

[View Results](#)

[vote](#)

 [SAVE THIS](#)  [EMAIL THIS](#)  [PRINT THIS](#)  [MOST POPULAR](#)

## RELATED STORIES:

- [Israel branded 'racist' by rights forum](#)  
September 2, 2001
- [Arafat: Summit must condemn Israel](#)  
August 31, 2001
- [U.S. sending envoys to racism conference](#)  
August 29, 2001
- [Powell skipping U.N. racism conference](#)  
August 28, 2001
- [Castro among 20 leaders to attend UN racism talks](#)  
August 24, 2001

**RELATED SITES:**

- [United Nations](#)
- [World Conference Against Racism](#)

**Note: Pages will open in a new browser window**  
*External sites are not endorsed by CNN Interactive.*

**WORLD TOP STORIES:**

- [Palestinians exit Bethlehem church](#)
- [Myanmar hopes high for Suu Kyi release](#)
- [UK to Farrakhan: Stay out](#)
- [Musharraf 'confident' of poll win](#)
- [Parents' conjoined twins agony](#)

[\(More\)](#)

Search

CNN.com

[Back to the top](#)

© 2002 Cable News Network LP, LLLP.  
An AOL Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms](#) under which this service is provided to you.  
Read our [privacy guidelines](#). [Contact us](#).